

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard and the time-frame fixed for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) Pollution abatement works have been sanctioned under the National River Conservation Plan in 11 towns located on the banks of 7 rivers in Madhya Pradesh. These towns are Indore, Ujjain, Burhanpur, Mandideep, Bhopal, Vidisha, Jabalpur, Seoni, Chapara, Keolari and Nagda. Bhojpur is not included under this Plan. Since Mandideep, Bhopal and Vidisha have been included under the National river Conservation Plan, these towns will not have any adverse impact after the pollution abatement works are completed. The approved cost of works for all the 11 towns is Rs. 101.19 crore. So far, out of 76 schemes of pollution abatement, 54 schemes have been sanctioned for an amount of Rs. 36.48 crore. An amount of Rs. 21.11 crore has been released to government of Madhya Pradesh so far for implementation of these schemes. Out of 54 schemes sanctioned, 24 schemes have been completed. The Plan is likely to be completed by 2006. Industrial pollution from these towns is monitored by the State Pollution Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board under the existing environmental laws.

Adequacy of forest area

1425. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the forest area at present in the country and whether it is adequate from the environment point of view; and

(b) if not, what steps are being taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Forest area of the country is 76.52 million hectares and forest cover of the country is 63.72 million hectares. As per National Forest Policy 1988, the national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the geographical area of the country under forest/tree cover.

(b) Following important actions have been taken for conservation and development of forests and for increasing forest cover of the country:

- (i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State/UT Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.
- (ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.
- (iii) Guidelines to all State/UT Governments to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.
- (iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands.
- (v) A network of protected areas has been established.
- (vi) Recently, Ministry has prepared a National Forestry Action Plan to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through improvement in investment for conservation and development of forest resources.

Air Pollution in Delhi

1426. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Tata Energy Research Institute, after sampling the air in one of the city greensheds area-Lodi Road, has found that the air is more dustier today even though the Supreme Court's decision to drive out old vehicles has to reduce air pollution in Delhi to a great extent;
- (b) if so, what are Government's findings; and
- (c) what steps Government are planning/taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The findings of the Tata Energy Research